

October 23, 2019

## **Statement from Burgerville USA**

Last week, Burgerville and the Burgerville Workers Union met for two days for collective bargaining. Burgerville and the union were able to come to agreement on most items being negotiated except wages. The union was not willing to accept Burgerville's proposed wage increases.

"Burgerville is a 58-year-old, locally owned and operated company that invests in the entire region through our employees, our communities, and our farmers and ranchers. The union can walk away, but we're not. We will be here tomorrow and the next day and the next day working hard for our guests, our employees, and our region," said Burgerville CEO Jill Taylor.

Wages remain an area of disagreement. The union originally asked for a \$5/hour increase in hourly wages for unionized workers only, which at the time would have brought starting wages to \$17/hour at the five unionized Burgerville restaurants. This would have been a 36% increase for approximately 12% of the workforce. Only five of Burgerville's 41 locations are unionized.

Last week, Burgerville announced taking out a \$3 million loan to increase wages for all crew members at all restaurants by \$1/hour. Starting December 30, 2019, Burgerville workers everywhere will make a minimum of \$13.50/hour plus tips, which currently range from \$0.82-\$4.24/hour depending on the location. In Oregon, this increase means Burgerville workers will make above minimum wage for at least the next year and a half.

Burgerville is also increasing the higher end of the pay scale and the pace at which employees move up that pay scale. The high end of the range is now \$16.18/hour plus tips.

"Our employees are at the heart of Burgerville. We have been working to better meet their needs. The Burgerville Workers Union has helped us see some of those needs. Our intention is to make the Pacific Northwest the healthiest region on the planet. We would love the union's help to achieve that," Taylor said.

### Frequently Asked Questions

*Will the new wage increases announced from Burgerville simply keep pace with state-mandated minimum wage increases?*

The new wage increases were already planned for Burgerville restaurants in Washington, where state-mandated minimum wage increases to \$13.50/hour on January 1, 2020. In Oregon, state-mandated minimum wage increases come on July 1, 2020, when they move to \$13.25/hour in the three Portland Metro counties, and \$12/hour everywhere else. In comparison, new Burgerville employees will make \$13.50/hour at all locations, plus tips and opportunities to quickly move up the pay scale from there.

*Did Burgerville need the loan to pay for state-mandated minimum-wage increases?*

No, Burgerville was already planning for and able to comply with state-mandated minimum-wage increases without a loan. The loan enabled Burgerville to increase Oregon employees' wages early, increase the higher end of the pay scale, and increase the rate at which employees can move up the pay scale and advance in their careers.

*What other benefits does BV offer?*

Other employee benefits that Burgerville already offers include affordable health insurance, life insurance, sick leave, career advancement opportunities, an annual scholarship program, and financial resources for any employee in need through Oregon's nonprofit Save First Financial Wellness.

*How much is Burgerville health insurance? How does one qualify?*

All employees working more than 30 hours/week qualify for Burgerville health insurance. The cost to the employee is \$35/month. Burgerville pays the remainder, which averages \$512 per employee. This year, annual health insurance premiums increases, and Burgerville absorbed 100% of that increase, keeping employee contributions to \$35/month.

*Does Burgerville provide healthcare for transgender employees?*

Yes, Burgerville health insurance covers transgender employees. Burgerville has always supported its transgender employees.

*Is Burgerville treating union members and employees of color differently in its restaurants?*

Burgerville has clear employment policies that are fairly and consistently enforced across the board regarding shift meals, attendance, safety and other matters.

### About Burgerville

Burgerville is a Northwest-grown company established in Vancouver, Wash. in 1961. Burgerville employs more than 1,600 people at locations throughout Oregon and Washington. It was one of the first, and remains one of the few, fast-food restaurants in the nation to offer affordable health insurance to hourly employees. Average employee tenure is 32 months – 33 percent longer than the industry average.